

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously presented) An apparatus for processing mail, comprising:
 - a transport for conveying mail along a transport path;
 - a scale positioned along the transport path for weighing the pieces of mail;
 - an imaging station positioned along the transport path for scanning the pieces of mail to obtain image data for the mail to determine address information of the recipients of the pieces;
 - a labeler positioned along the transport path for applying labels to the mail;
 - a processor operable to determine postage information for a piece of mail in response to the determined address information and weight of the piece of mail;
 - a printer operable to print the determined postage information onto the label for the piece, wherein if the address information is not determined for a mail piece within a predetermined time period, the printer prints an identification code onto the label;
 - a verifier operable to scan the label applied by the labeler to verify that the postage information printed by the printer was printed properly; and
 - a sorter for sorting mailpieces in response to the determined address information and weight.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the imaging station comprises a line scan camera for scanning the piece of mail at a plurality of discrete points to create a set of image data representative of at least a portion of the piece of mail.
4. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 3 wherein the imaging station comprises an imaging computer for processing the image data to determine the address information.
5. (Original) The apparatus of the claim 4 wherein the imaging computer analyzes the image data utilizing OCR to determine the address and the Zipcode of the recipient of the piece, and the piece is rejected if the determined address and Zipcode do not properly correlate.

- 6-7. (Canceled)
8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 comprising a reject bin for receiving pieces for which the recipient's address is not determined.
9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1 comprising a re-orientor operable to re-orient the mail as the feeder feeds the mail into the transport.
10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the transport comprises a roller bed for conveying the pieces of mail in a generally horizontal orientation.
11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1 comprising a verifier operable to scan the pieces and determine whether the postage information was properly printed.
12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the verifier comprises a line scan camera for scanning the pieces of mail at a plurality of discrete points to create image data representative of at least a portion of the pieces of mail.
13. (Previously Presented) A method for processing mail, comprising the steps of:
 scanning a piece of mail to determine address information for the recipient;
 conveying the piece of mail to a scale;
 weighing the piece;
 determining the appropriate postage information based on the determined address information and the determined weight of the piece;
 adhering a label onto the piece;
 selectively printing postage information on the label if the address information was determined for the piece or printing an identification number on the label if the address information was not determined within a predetermined time period;
 scanning the printed postage information to verify that the postage information was properly printed; and
 sorting the piece of mail in response to the determined address information and the determined weight.

14-17. (Canceled)

18. (Original) The method of claim 13 comprising the step of serially feeding the piece from a stack of mail in an input bin.

19-28. (Canceled)

29. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1 comprising a sorter for sorting a piece of mail into one of a plurality of bins in response to the determined weight for the piece.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for processing mail, comprising:

- a transport for conveying mail along a path;
- a scale positioned along the path for weighing the pieces of mail;
- a scanner positioned along the transport path for scanning the pieces of mail to obtain image data for the mail to determine address information of the recipients of the pieces;
- a labeler positioned along the transport path for applying labels to the pieces of mail;
- a processor operable to determine postage information for a piece of mail in response to the weight of the piece of mail;
- a printer operable to print the determined postage information onto the label for the piece, if the address information for the piece was determined and to print an identification number on the piece if the address information for the piece was not properly determined;
- a verifier operable to scan the label applied by the labeler to verify that the postage information printed by the printer was printed properly; and
- a sorter operable to sort the piece of mail into one of a plurality of bins based on the weight of the piece of mail.

32. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 31 wherein the processor determines the postage information in response to the determined recipient's address information and the weight of the piece.
33. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 31 wherein the sorter is operable to sort the piece of mail based on the weight of the piece of mail and the address information for the recipient of the piece of mail.
34. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 31 wherein the scanner comprises a line scan camera for scanning the piece of mail at a plurality of discrete points to create a set of image data representative of at least a portion of the piece of mail.
35. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 34 wherein the scanner comprises an imaging computer for processing the image data to determine the recipient of the piece.
36. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of the claim 35 wherein the imaging computer analyzes the image data utilizing OCR to determine the address and the Zipcode of the recipient of the piece, and the piece is rejected if the determined address and Zipcode do not properly correlate.
37. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 31 comprising a reject bin for receiving pieces for which the recipient's address is not determined.
38. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 31 comprising a re-orientor operable to re-orient the mail as the feeder feeds the mail into the transport.
39. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 31 wherein the transport is configured to transport the pieces of mail in a generally horizontal orientation.
40. (Canceled)
41. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 31 wherein the verifier comprises a line

scan camera for scanning the labels at a plurality of discrete points to create image data representative of at least a portion of the pieces of mail.

42. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for processing mail, comprising:
 - a transport for conveying mail along a path;
 - a scale positioned along the path for weighing the pieces of mail;
 - a scanner positioned along the transport path for scanning the pieces of mail to determine address information of the recipients of the pieces;
 - a labeler positioned along the transport path for selectively applying labels to the pieces of mail conveyed along the transport path;
 - a processor operable to selectively determine postage information for a piece of mail in response to the weight of the piece of mail; and
 - a printer operable to selectively print the determined postage information onto the label for the piece if the address information of the recipients of the piece are determined within a predetermined time period, and to print an identification number on the label if the address information of the recipients of the piece are not determined within a predetermined time period.
43. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 42 comprising a sorter operable to sort the piece of mail into one of a plurality of bins based on the weight of the piece of mail.
44. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 42 wherein the processor is operable to selectively determine the postage information for the piece of mail in response to the recipient of the piece of mail.
45. (Previously Presented) A method for processing mail, comprising the steps of:
 - scanning a piece of mail to determine the recipient;
 - conveying the piece of mail along a transport path to a scale;
 - weighing the piece;
 - determining the postage information for the piece based on the determined weight of the piece;
 - conveying the piece along the transport path to a labeler;

adhering a label onto the piece, wherein labels are applied to pieces conveyed along the transport path to the labeler;
printing the determined postage information on the label if the recipient of the piece is determined within a predetermined time period or printing an identification number on the piece if the recipient is not determined within the predetermined time period;
conveying the piece along the transport path to a sorter; and
sorting the piece into one of a plurality of bins based on the weight of the piece.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45 wherein the step of determining the appropriate postage comprises determining the appropriate postage based on the determined address and the determined weight of the piece.
47. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~45~~ 45 wherein the step of sorting comprises sorting the piece according to the recipient's address.
48. (Previously Presented) A method for processing mail, comprising the steps of:
scanning pieces of mail to determine address data for the pieces;
conveying the pieces of mail along a transport path to a scale;
weighing the pieces;
determining postage information for the pieces based on the determined weight of each piece;
conveying the pieces along the transport path to a labeler;
adhering labels onto the pieces, wherein postage information is printed onto select labels that are applied to select pieces and identification numbers are printed onto select labels that are applied to other select pieces if the identification information for the other select pieces is not determined within a predetermined time period;
conveying the pieces along the transport path to a sorter; and
sorting the pieces into one of a plurality of bins.
49. (Canceled)

50. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the transport is configured to convey a batch of mixed mail of various heights and thicknesses.
51. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 50 wherein the transport is a substantially horizontal transport configured to convey the mail pieces to the imaging station in a substantially horizontal orientation.
52. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13 comprising the step of providing a batch of mixed mail having pieces of various size.
53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13 wherein the step of conveying comprises conveying the piece of mail in a generally horizontal orientation.
54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 53 wherein the step of adhering a label comprises displacing the piece of mail in a generally horizontal orientation to a labeler and adhering a label to the piece of mail while the piece of mail is in a generally horizontal orientation.
55. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 31 wherein the transport comprises a generally horizontal surface configured to receive and convey mail pieces in a generally horizontal orientation.
56. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 31 comprising a feeder configured to accommodate a mixed batch of mail having pieces of various size.
57. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 42 wherein the transport comprises a generally horizontal surface configured to receive and convey mail pieces in a generally horizontal orientation.
58. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 42 comprising a feeder configured to accommodate a mixed batch of mail having pieces of various size.

59. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45 comprising the step of providing a batch of mixed mail having pieces of various size.
60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45 wherein the step of conveying comprises conveying the piece of mail in a generally horizontal orientation.
61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein the step of adhering a label comprises displacing the piece of mail in a generally horizontal orientation to a labeler and adhering a label to the piece of mail while the piece of mail is in a generally horizontal orientation.
62. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48 comprising the step of providing a batch of mixed mail having pieces of various size.
63. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48 wherein the step of conveying comprises conveying the piece of mail in a generally horizontal orientation.
64. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 63 wherein the step of adhering a label comprises displacing the piece of mail in a generally horizontal orientation to a labeler and adhering a label to the piece of mail while the piece of mail is in a generally horizontal orientation.
65. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for processing mail, comprising:
a transport configured for convey mail in a generally horizontal orientation along a path;
a scale positioned along the path for weighing the pieces of mail;
a scanner positioned along the transport path for scanning the pieces of mail to determine address information of the recipients of the pieces;
a labeler positioned along the transport path for applying labels to the pieces of mail; and
a processor operable to selectively determine postal information for a piece of mail in response to the weight of the piece of mail;

wherein postal information is printed onto select labels in response to the determined postal information and select other labels are printed with identification numbers instead of postal information if the address information for the select other labels is not determined within a predetermined time period.

66. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 65 wherein the processor is operable to determine the postal information for the piece in response to the weight and the determined address information.
67. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 65 wherein the labeler is configured to receive the piece of mail in a generally horizontal orientation and apply the label in a generally horizontal orientation.
68. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 65 comprising a sorter for sorting the piece of mail into one of a plurality of bins based on the weight or determined address information.
69. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 65 comprising a sorter for sorting the piece of mail in response to the determined postal information.
70. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the weight information is correlated with the identification number so that the postage information can be determined for the piece without re-weighing the piece, once the address information is determined for the piece.